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ABSTRACT

Despite the importance of breakfast, summer, and after-school child nutrition programs, coverage in these programs in Massachusetts is low. This report describes the barriers facing the state's School Breakfast, Summer Food Service, and After-School Snack Programs and suggests many innovative solutions and resources that program sponsors can use to overcome these barriers and boost enrollment. The five barriers examined individually are: (1) program appeal and visibility; (2) costs and funding; (3) transportation; (4) program stigma; and (5) administrative burdens. Within each section are examples of how other programs have encountered similar barriers and implemented one of the highlighted solutions to overcome the barriers. The "best practice" case models show how programs can overcome barriers and improve program coverage of at-risk youth. The report asserts that although the barriers represent a serious threat to the success of federal child nutrition programs and to the health and educational readiness of Massachusetts children, solutions are available to sponsors to overcome these barriers. A list of resources for sponsors of breakfast, summer, and after-school nutrition programs includes state and national organizations, government agencies, and Internet sites. The report's four appendices contain information about the Child Nutrition Programs, a sample Frequently Asked Questions sheet, a Universal Free Breakfast Fact Sheet, and a summary of the provisions of policy memos from the USDA regarding the Summer Food Service Program. (KB)

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Breaking Child Nutrition Barriers

Innovative Practices in Massachusetts School Breakfast, Summer Food, and After-School Snack Programs

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Foreword

I am very pleased to make this useful document available to Massachusetts residents concerned about the unacceptable number of Massachusetts children threatened by not having enough to eat. No child in our state or in our wealthy democracy should go hungry. This document shows how schools and communities can work together to utilize *currently funded* child nutrition programs to combat hunger and improve student academic performance. We hope that it will be used to build a strong safety net in every town of the Commonwealth to insure that no child's health or educational potential is impaired by hunger.

The Center on Hunger and Poverty works to promote policies that improve the lives and developmental capacities of low-income children and families in the nation. Established in 1990, the Center conducts applied research and policy analysis, disseminates analytic information on poverty and hunger, carries out public education initiatives, and provides assistance to policy makers and organizations across the country on poverty- and hunger-related issues.

The Center on Hunger and Poverty is part of the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University. Center programs are carried out through the Asset Development Institute and the Food Security Institute, and through a series of special projects.

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Executive Director, Center on Hunger and Poverty
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Introduction

Every school year in the U.S., close to 28 million children eat lunch through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Sixteen million of these children are from low-income families with a household income below 185% of the federal poverty line.[1] While the NSLP does an excellent job of providing a healthy meal to children during the noon school hours, many children go without meals during other important periods of the day such as breakfast time, after-school hours, and during the summer months when school is not in session.

To fill in these gaps, three important programs have come to the forefront of the child nutrition landscape to feed children, especially at-risk children from low-income households: the **School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP),**[2] **and the After-School Snack Program (ASSP).** These three programs operate during critical times when parents are unable to provide their children healthy meals because they may lack the time, work non-traditional hours, or most importantly, lack the financial resources.

Despite the importance of breakfast, summer, and after-school child nutrition programs, program coverage in all three programs in Massachusetts is low:

- **School Breakfast Program**: Only 45% of low-income Massachusetts children who participate in the National School Lunch Program participate in the School Breakfast Program. Close to 120,000 low-income Massachusetts children (enrolled in free or reduced price lunch) risk starting the day without a healthy breakfast.[3]

- **Summer Food Service Program**: Only 22% of Massachusetts children that receive free or reduced price lunch receive a summer meal through the SFSP. Over 160,000 low-income Massachusetts children (enrolled in free or reduced price lunch) risk going without necessary meals during summer months.[4]

- **After-School Snack Program**: In March 2002, only 14,000 low-income children received a snack or supper through either the NSLP or CACFP After-School Snack Program.[5,6]

For the institutions, organizations and individuals running these programs, increasing program coverage involves overcoming a variety of administrative and operational barriers. These barriers can undermine outreach efforts, create burdensome administrative procedures, and endanger the financial stability of a program. The issue of program barriers is especially serious for low-income children who rely upon morning, after-school, and summer nutrition programs to provide them with the nutrition they otherwise may not get.

This publication describes the barriers facing Massachusetts School Breakfast, Summer Food Service, and After-School Snack Programs and suggests many innovative solutions and resources that program sponsors can use to overcome these barriers.

Description of Barriers

Running a successful child nutrition program is defined in large part by the ability to reach out to, and provide, nutritious meals to as many children - especially low-income children - as possible. There are many barriers, however, that prevent School Breakfast, Summer Food Service, and After-School Snack Program sponsors from realizing maximum program coverage. Five of the biggest barriers facing these programs are limited program appeal and visibility, costs and funding, transportation, program stigma, and administrative burdens.

1. Program Appeal and Visibility

When a sponsor fails to sufficiently advertise and promote the program's services and benefits, fails to address administrative apprehension, and fails to provide an attractive program environment for children, the appeal for and visibility of the program among children, parents, teachers, school staff, and other groups and individuals inevitably suffers.

2. Costs and Funding

High administrative and operational costs combined with limited program funding and low federal and state reimbursement rates can greatly endanger a program financially. This barrier is especially serious for small and/or rural sponsors. If a sponsor cannot sufficiently afford to operate and administer a program, the program faces closure or severe restriction in services and meals offered.

3. Transportation

For School Breakfast Programs, the window of time between the arrival of buses and the beginning of class is usually insufficient to properly run a breakfast program. For Summer Food Service and After-School Snack Programs, arranging transportation for the pick-up and drop-off of children, delivery of food to sites, and transportation of food from vendors can be costly.

4. Program Stigma

For low-income children, child nutrition programs are often referred to as programs for the "poor" or "needy." To avoid the stigma associated with free and reduced price meal programs, many children (and parents) will avoid applying for and participating in the program altogether.

5. Administrative Burdens

Burdensome and confusing paperwork and strict and inflexible rules and regulations can both frustrate program sponsors and deplete limited administrative resources.

The following sections look at each barrier category individually and highlight many of the innovative solutions available to program sponsors to overcome the barrier. In addition, where applicable, some important informational resources for sponsors are included. Finally, each section has examples of other programs that have encountered similar barriers and how it implemented one of the highlighted solutions to overcome the barrier. These "best practice" case models are important tools that show how a program can overcome barriers and improve program coverage of at-risk youth.

Barrier 1: Program Appeal and Visibility

The School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and the After-School Snack Program all suffer from limited program appeal and visibility. To successfully overcome this barrier, program sponsors can take three important steps: better advertise and promote their program's services and benefits, overcome any administrative reticence or apprehension, and provide a more attractive program environment to children and their parents.

Increased Promotion and Advertising of Program Benefits and Services

Raise awareness of and interest in programs by publicly advertising and promoting your program's services and benefits. One way to raise awareness and visibility is to hold meetings and give presentations about the benefits and services of your program and to answer any questions about the program's administrative and operational components. For example:

- School Food Service Directors can hold presentations during staff meetings about the benefits of child nutrition programs for children and the educational process. This is especially important if a school is planning on introducing an innovative practice such as Universal Free Breakfast (see section on Stigma for more information on Universal Free Breakfast) or changing busing schedules.

- Teachers can use yearly parent-teacher meetings as an opportunity to talk with parents, especially low-income parents, about the availability and benefits of a school's child nutrition programs. Teachers can provide parents with applications, brochures, sample menus and other information about the benefits of child nutrition programs.

- Non-school sponsors of child nutrition programs can hold meetings with local leaders and other community members to raise awareness of programs and answer questions about costs, scheduling, child safety, food safety, and transportation. Sponsors can also use these meetings as fundraising opportunities or to ask for donations.

- Sponsors can set up a booth or speak at community events such as county or community fairs, public or private school carnivals, special library programs, health fairs, neighborhood watch meetings, and police and fire department community meetings.

- Sponsors can arrange for program volunteers, AmeriCorps participants, or program staff to go door to door in area neighborhoods to talk directly to parents and children. Prepare fact sheets or door hangers to leave if no one is home.

An important part of overcoming low general awareness is being able to effectively communicate the many benefits of breakfast, summer, and after-school nutrition programs. Some important information and facts on each program can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Another way to raise awareness and visibility of your program is to publicly advertise program benefits and services such as menus, special events, public meetings or presentations, fundraising events, donation drives, fact sheets detailing program benefits, and information detailing the availability of free and reduced price meals for low-income children. Examples of places to advertise include:

- ✓ Schools (including guidance counselor offices, nurses' offices, and cafeterias
- ✓ Day care centers
- ✓ Recreation centers
- ✓ Apartment/Housing complexes
- ✓ School PA system
- ✓ Libraries
- ✓ Grocery stores
- ✓ Community centers
- ✓ Swimming pools
- ✓ Churches
- ✓ Social service and public aid offices (Food Stamps, WIC)
- ✓ Personalized letters to parents
- ✓ Laundromats
- ✓ Womens'/Homeless Shelters
- ✓ Community Action Agencies
- ✓ Soup kitchens/pantries
- ✓ School newspapers and mailings

Working with local news media:

Using the media can be a very effective way of marketing your child nutrition program. Media coverage can let low-income families know about the location, availability, and benefits of your nutrition program. A press release, public service announcement, or simple phone call can alert the news media about your program. Here are some general tips on getting the message about your program to the media.

- Keep announcements about your program short, simple, and upbeat. Stay away from jargon and other confusing technical language. Be sure to include contact information along with time, location, and other important site information.
- Have a kick-off event, possibly inviting a local celebrity or politician and the media.
- In addition to newspaper, be sure to utilize television and radio media such as radio talk shows and public affairs programming.
- Insert notices, menus, and other information in community bulletins, newsletters, and community calendars.
- Don't just rely on large media entities. Local and other smaller community-based media are more likely to cover community events.
- Contact reporters who cover children, education, or community issues about your program.
- Timing: allow enough time to get a message in print, on the radio, or even on the television.
- If you have little experience working with the news media, arrange a training, possibly with other local program sponsors, in how to deal with the media. The USDA's Northeast Regional Office of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has a public affairs office that can lend assistance in media training. See the resources list for contact information.

Overcoming Administrative Apprehension

When a sponsor attempts to change, expand or start up a new breakfast, summer, and/or after-school nutrition program, those efforts can be met with apprehension from staff or other individuals such as school principals, teachers, and food service workers. Administrative apprehension can become more of an issue if a school is considering drastically altering a program, such as implementing a "Universal Free Breakfast" program. Some of the issues staff and other individuals are often concerned about include:

- Setup and preparation time
- Cost
- Lost instruction time
- Food waste
- Litter
- Increased work for custodial staff, teachers, and food service workers
- Scheduling

To overcome administrative apprehension, child nutrition program administrators need to educate and inform staff and other individuals about the benefits of their respective child nutrition program(s) and the program's administrative and operational components. While some concerns may be unfounded, some are sincere and deserve recognition. School food service directors and program administrators can ease these concerns by preparing a list of the most "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) with detailed answers to each potential question or concern. For a sample FAQ fact sheet, see **Appendix 2**.

Another way to overcome administrative apprehension is to encourage concerned or apprehensive staff or individuals to talk with other program sponsors who have successfully implemented an innovative practice (such as Universal Free Breakfast) or overcome a barrier. Contact Project Bread or the Massachusetts Department of Education for more information on talking with other program sponsors or contact any of the schools or organizations highlighted in this publication.

Brockton Boys and Girls Club
Brockton, MA

This Summer Program has six playground sites and one full-day, low-cost camp. Every summer about 130 at-risk, low-income children participate in the day camp and around 200-300 children participate at the playground sites. The program serves African American, Hispanic, Caucasian, Cape Verdean, Haitian, and Asian children up to age 18.

All summer long the Summer Program provides a range of different activities for the children. Field trips for both the day camp and playground camps occur once a week to places such as zoos. The program has weekly cultural diversity activities centered on a different country or ethnicity. The children can participate in educational games and sports (such as academic competition and Olympics). The program has unique activities such as Wacky Olympics, Space Day, and Cowboy Day along with programs specially tailored to specific interests such as cheerleading and other activities. The program also has guest visits from the local DARE program and State Police Barracks. Children are given the chance to go on field trips to the University of Massachusetts Extension Nutrition Education Program to learn about nutrition. Once a week, a volunteer from the University of Massachusetts comes to the program to talk about nutrition.

The Brockton Boys and Girls Club Summer Program also benefits from having 30 youth "counselors in training" that are hired by the Brockton Area Private Industry Council (PIC) to help supervise the children, serve meals, and help develop activities and crafts for the program. The youth counselors are paid by the PIC, representing a free source of volunteer labor for the program.

Contact: Deborah Sheehan or Jen Aldworth
Phone: 508-584-5209

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Providing an Attractive Program Environment for Children

Another way for program sponsors to raise awareness and visibility of their programs is to provide an attractive program environment for children and parents. The more attractive a program is, the more incentive a child has to attend.

Use activities to increase program appeal. One way to provide an attractive program environment for children and parents is to provide fun and enriching activities. Offering good food in an appealing manner will no doubt attract children. Equally important, however, is offering an activity program that is fun and provides children with opportunities to learn and grow. Many children will come for the good meal, but many more will come based on related activities.

Providing activities for children can be both expensive and logistically difficult. Limited financial resources can restrict recreational equipment purchases. Space can also limit the number and variety of recreational activities sponsors can offer. There are a few solutions that sponsors can implement to overcome this barrier:

- Invite local celebrities such as sports stars and television personalities or arrange for the visit of a local police officer or firefighter.
- Create ongoing promotions such as weekly raffles, pizza parties, ice cream socials, or theme-based parties.
- Advertise your space to school groups and clubs that need a weekly meeting place. Create a new group or club for regular program participants.
- Sponsor fun trips to places such as zoos, aquariums, sporting events, movie theaters, theme parks, and lakes and beaches. To reduce cost, ask to have the full or partial cost of the trip donated to the group by the business itself or another local business or organization.
- Involve creative education in your field trips by taking children to places such as libraries, planetariums, local farms, museums, or on more creative trips such as visits to a factory that makes candy or toys.

In order to offer attractive activity programs to children, many programs have formed partnerships with local Parks and Recreation Departments or teamed up with local Boys and Girls Clubs. For more information on forming partnerships, see the section on "Administrative Burdens."

Hold awareness-raising events and activities

One way to both raise awareness about a program and increase program visibility is to sponsor fun and entertaining events and activities. Examples include:

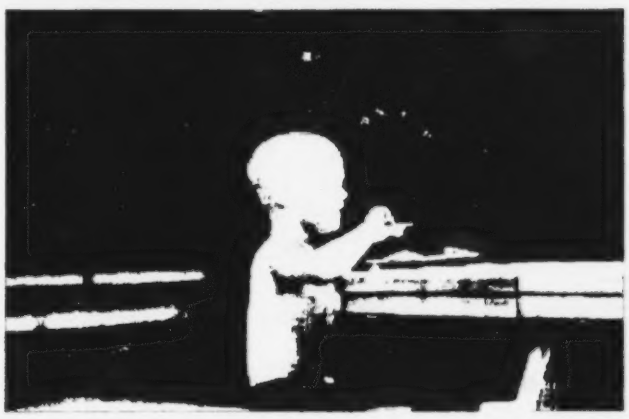
- Parent-student breakfasts
- Open houses
- Parties or celebrations
- School socials
- Visits from local celebrities
- Contests and raffles
- Special gourmet meals by local chefs
- Meetings for school clubs
- Fundraising events and donation drives

Menu variety. Another factor determining a child's interest in a program is variety in the menu. Programs should make an effort to provide as much variety as possible in their monthly menus, emphasizing favorite foods often chosen by participating children. A recent survey of Summer Food Service Program site supervisors found that there are certain food items that children liked more than others.[7] Some of the *most* and *least* liked foods include:

Foods Liked Most	Foods Liked Least
• Pizza	• Bologna
• Ham	• Tacos, enchiladas, burritos, fajitas
• Chicken nuggets	• Roast beef
• Carrots	• Peas
• Corn	• Celery
• Potatoes (French fries, potato puffs)	• Broccoli
• Oranges	• Apples or apple sauce
• Peaches	• Bananas
• Mixed fruit cup	• Pears
• White bread	• Dark bread
• Hot dog and hamburger buns	• Corn bread
• Rolls	• White milk
• Chocolate milk	

Not all children have the same food preferences. What one child may like, another may dislike. It is important for program administrators to recognize the need for menu variety to accommodate diverse food preferences while working within the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Additional information on child food preferences can be obtained by asking local school Food Service Directors what the most widely liked food items are during lunchtime.

In addition to providing preferred foods, breakfast, summer, and after-school nutrition programs can also add variety to their menus by holding special events centered on food, such as ice cream socials, pizza parties, and theme days such as Mexican or Chinese food day. Program administrators can also conduct impromptu panels to gauge children's food preferences or create fun surveys or taste tests to see what foods children like the best.



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Program safety. Not only do programs need to be attractive to children, but they also need to attract attention from parents. One of the biggest issues for parents is the safety of their children while at the program, especially for Summer Food Service and After-School Snack programs, when most parents are at work. Parents want to feel confident their children will be safe on the way to, during, and on the way home from the program.

Program sponsors should include safety information in all outreach materials, and may even want to consider letters to parents specifically addressing the issue of program safety.

Arnone Community School
Brockton, MA

At the Arnone Community School in Brockton, over 80% of the 700 students are eligible for free or reduced price meals. To deal with the increasing number of students who came to school without eating breakfast, school principal Ray Chestnut implemented a universal free breakfast program. To encourage students to take advantage of free breakfast, Principal Chestnut has implemented a variety of innovative practices to improve general awareness about the benefits and availability of the breakfast program.

To coordinate the breakfast program, Principal Chestnut hired a breakfast coordinator, a full time employee responsible for coordinating breakfast and encouraging children to participate. Teachers often volunteer to help monitor the program and teachers routinely talk to students about the importance of breakfast. During test times, teachers and staff make extra efforts to remind both parents and children of the need and availability of the free breakfast program. During the warmer months, school staff make an extra effort to tell children they should eat breakfast first before going outside to the playground before classes start.

To encourage participation, the school often raffles away prizes to children who regularly participate and has in the past had a breakfast club. To accommodate different tastes, the school offers a variety of foods such as different brands of cold cereals and occasionally offers new foods such as granola bars. The school's health teacher has even created an ongoing milk mustache photo gallery with pictures of students with milk mustaches.

One of the most important factors that makes the Arnone Community School universal free breakfast successful is the flexibility offered to students. Students usually have about 10-20 minutes to eat breakfast, but if a school bus arrives late and a student shows up to class hungry or with a stomachache, the student is allowed to go to the cafeteria and eat breakfast.

Contact: Ray Chestnut, Principal
Phone: 508-894-4440

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Barrier 2: Costs and Funding

Some breakfast, summer, and after-school nutrition programs are constrained by limited funding and high operational costs. A combination of state budget cuts in state education, low federal reimbursement rates for meals, and low program participation have forced some programs to use other discretionary funds, scale back or restrict the program, or reconsider sponsoring the program altogether.

There are numerous ways that each program can address cost and funding issues.

School Breakfast - Universal Free Breakfast

Providing universally free meals to all participating children has been shown to be a particularly effective way of keeping costs constant while raising additional program revenue, especially for at-risk schools where 75% or more of children are eligible for free or reduced price meals. A recent USDA study found that combined food and labor costs per breakfast in non-classroom Universal Free Breakfast (UFB) Programs were 11% lower than non-UFB programs.[8] The cost advantage in UFB comes from both increased participation (which increases meal reimbursements) and relatively fixed labor costs (the labor cost per reimbursable breakfast declines as the number of breakfasts increase).

When Universal Free Breakfast is served in the classroom, per-meal labor costs drop even lower - 18% lower than non-UFB programs. Classroom and other innovative serving practices are discussed in more detail in section on "Transportation."

A full fact sheet on Universal Free Breakfast can be found in **Appendix 3**. Universal Free Breakfast's impact on alleviating program stigma can be found in the section on "Program Stigma."

Somerville Public Schools
Somerville, MA

The Somerville Public Schools' Food Service Department feeds after-school snacks to between 350 and 500 children through the NSLP. The snack programs are located in several area-eligible elementary schools and each program is operated by either the school district or another organization such as the local YMCA or Boys and Girls Club.

The Somerville Public Schools have remained successful mainly due to their ability to control costs and maximize federal reimbursements. They are able to maximize federal reimbursements by both maximizing participation and taking advantage of area eligibility rules. They are also able to control costs by utilizing existing food service staff, who prepare snacks before they leave for the day, and using the same popular snack items that are served in the school lunch. Using the same popular snack items that are served in the school lunch maximizes economies of scale and ensures that the children will enjoy and eat the snack.

Contact: Mary Jane McLarney, Food Service Director
Phone: 617-625-6600, ext 6082

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Summer Food and After-School Snacks - Controlling Costs and Increasing Outside Funding

For many Summer Food Service and After-School Snack Programs, especially those programs based in non-school community organizations or agencies, financial barriers can often be the main factor preventing a program from providing meals to more eligible children, expanding to new sites, or providing sufficient activities for the children. The financial barriers facing both programs can be broken down into two categories: high operating costs and limited program funding.

Controlling high operating costs. To overcome the barrier of high operational costs, many programs introduce innovative cost-cutting solutions such as cost-effective purchasing and menu practices. Some of those innovative cost-cutting solutions include:

- ✓ Work with other sponsors in the area to use the same vendor to reduce food costs.
- ✓ Buy products in bulk through grocery and paper wholesalers such as Costco or Sam's Club.
- ✓ Watch for specials at local grocery stores and take advantage of coupons in weekly newspapers. Change weekly menus to take advantage of food item specials and use specials to stock up on items you can use later.
- ✓ Contact vendors at local farmers' markets to purchase low-price fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Use foods that are in season. They will be cheaper and fresher. Take advantage of gleaning operations when possible.
- ✓ Strategically ask for donations for expensive and widely used items such as paper plates, plastic forks and spoons, napkins, cleaning products, etc. Also ask for donations of food, especially for pre-planned events like ice cream socials or pizza parties.
- ✓ Avoid overproduction. Use food production records to determine the exact quantity needed and adjust recipes for only the portions needed.
- ✓ If costs become too much of a problem, stick to serving only required meals and omit extras such as desserts.
- ✓ Train staff on standardization techniques and portion control.
- ✓ Consider the possibility of using central kitchens to provide meals to multiple locations or purchasing pre-plated meals from a food service management company.

Feeding Older Children

Summer Food Service and After School Snack Programs serving older youth may find that the meal or snack as defined under program regulations may not meet the full nutritional needs of their program participants. Seeking outside funding from private sources can help cover the costs of providing a larger meal or snack to older youth.

Increasing outside funding by building partnerships. To overcome the barrier of low or limited funding, some programs are building partnerships with outside organizations and people to raise additional funds and access additional resources. Local businesses and other entities are often willing to support programs in their community, especially ones for children. It is important to tap into "hidden" financial resources available in a community. The following are examples of ways to raise funds or donations by building partnerships within your community:

- ✓ Ask individuals, organizations, religious clergy or businesses to support your programs financially, with gifts, through volunteering, or by providing other resources such as equipment or kitchen space.
- ✓ Look for businesses that have connections to the children served through the program. For example, are the children and their families customers or consumers of their products?
- ✓ Ask a local organization such as a church or civic organization to coordinate a donation drive for materials, food, and recreational products.
- ✓ When requesting funding, focus on solutions. Don't just ask for money, but identify specific needs such as transportation, facility space, or paper supplies and indicate how their support with help.
- ✓ Ask the county or city government to provide a small amount of discretionary funding to cover either transportation costs or staff salaries.
- ✓ Ask a local restaurant to donate a percent of profits for a day or help cook or prepare meals.
- ✓ Contact national chains with local stores for funding, as well as local businesses such as grocery stores, restaurants, and fuel companies.
- ✓ Reach out to local colleges and universities to sponsor fundraisers or to volunteer at programs.
- ✓ Ask local businesses to sponsor and pay for special events such as trips to the zoo, pizza parties, ice cream socials, or other events.

East End Kid's Katering
Portland, ME

Finding adequate kitchen space and equipment to provide large quantities of meals can be costly for many summer food programs. East End Kid's Katering in Portland, Maine was able to overcome this barrier by partnering with the local organization Volunteers of America (VOE). VOE operated a large housing site for low-income elderly and had a large kitchen it was not using at the time. East End entered into a collaborative agreement with VOE that allows them to use the kitchen to prepare SFSP meals. The sponsor was also able to partner with other local groups, such as the University of Maine's Extension Service, Portland's public health department, Head Start, and WIC, to provide fun and enriching activities at the site along with opportunities for promoting the SFSP.

Contact: Lynn McGrath
Phone: 207-772-5467

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Barrier 3: Transportation

Transportation barriers sometimes give headaches to breakfast, summer, and after-school nutrition program sponsors, especially Summer Food Service and After-School Snack Program sponsors. Transportation barriers may include transportation of children to and from the program, delivery of food to sites, and delivery of food from vendors.

School Breakfast - Breakfast after the Bell

For School Breakfast Programs, the biggest transportation barrier comes in coordinating breakfast service with the short window of time between the arrival of buses and the beginning of class. Buses sometimes arrive late and many students do not have an opportunity to eat.

While altering bus schedules is an option, it can be a difficult process to change administratively. A good option for schools facing difficulties getting students to school on time for breakfast is to implement one of the many innovative "breakfast after the bell" options:

Breakfast in the classroom. The best "breakfast after the bell" option for elementary and middle schools is to serve breakfast in the classroom. Instead of having breakfast served in the traditional cafeteria setting, breakfast is brought to the classroom the time before class starts.

Breakfast in the classroom requires little time and doesn't upset complicated busing and class schedules. Simple meals are delivered to the classroom 10-15 minutes before class starts (during the same time attendance is being taken and school announcements are being made); afterward, students simply clean up their desks and dispose of waste. Some schools give teachers the flexibility to schedule breakfast anytime during the first 1-2 hours of the day. Breakfast in the classroom is often combined with a school serving **Universal Free Breakfast** (see section on "Costs and Funding" and "Program Stigma"), whereby all students are able to participate in breakfast, regardless of household income.

"Grab and go" meals and breakfast on the school bus. For junior-high and high schools, there are a variety of creative options for serving breakfast after the bell. Two of the most popular ideas are "grab and go" meals and breakfast on the school bus. "Grab and go" meals (also called "breakfast on the go") allow a student to pick up a bagged meal at a school entrance or central location. These meals can be eaten during scheduled breaks or during homeroom time. Breakfast on the school bus gives students the option of eating a bagged meal on the bus trip to school.

Sarah Greenwood Middle and Elementary School
Boston, MA

At the Sarah Greenwood Middle and Elementary School in Boston, Principal Isabel Méndez tackled the problem of scheduling and transportation issues by moving breakfast into the classroom. Instead of having students eat breakfast before class in the limited amount of time between the arrival of busses and the beginning of classes, students now have 15 minutes to eat breakfast while in homeroom. During this time, teachers take attendance and homework is collected. Each student is responsible for cleaning up his or her own space, which reduces the amount of clean-up work for custodians. Students remain in homeroom for the first period of classes, which gives students who arrive late the opportunity to also eat a full breakfast.

Contact: Isabel Méndez, Principal
Phone: 617-635-8710

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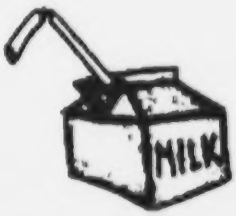
Nutrition breaks. Many schools report that older children, like adults, prefer to eat breakfast later in the morning than younger children. To accommodate later eating schedules, schools can provide breakfast during scheduled nutrition breaks during the day. Also referred to as "fast breaks," students pick up a simple, healthy meal from a central location(s) during one of the breaks in-between class (usually a lengthened break to give the students enough time to eat).

Extended cafeteria hours for late arriving students. One option for schools that are restricted to having breakfast in the cafeteria and have a short window of time in between the arrival of buses and the beginning of class is to extend cafeteria hours for students who arrive late and don't have enough time to eat breakfast.

Summer Food and After-School Snacks - Innovative Transportation Solutions



While School Breakfast Programs benefit from an already-existing transportation infrastructure, SFSP and After-School Snack Programs, even those that utilize school facilities, often have to arrange their own transportation options for the pick-up and drop-off of kids, delivery of food to sites, and/or pick-up of foods from vendors. Arranging for transportation can be difficult both logistically and costly, especially for rural SFSPs.

To make up for transportation shortfalls, many sponsors have turned to less expensive transportation options such as sharing with Parks and Recreation departments, Meals on Wheels, and Head Start Programs. Some sponsors have turned to universities or churches that have vans that go unused during the summer months.

One creative response to the issue of limited transportation resources is to create a "**mobile site.**" Children eat the meal on the bus; disembark, then the bus moves on to another site. This practice has shown success with rural SFSP sponsors. A 1999 policy memorandum by the USDA (#17-99) encourages the use of mobile feeding sites in rural areas and allows sponsors to claim the cost of transporting children to rural feed sites as an operating cost (which can be reimbursed).

Girls Incorporated of Lynn

Lynn, MA

Girls Inc. in Lynn has been operating programs specifically for girls since 1942. Part of their programs include after-school programs for teenage, elementary, and middle school girls, focusing on issues such as careers, life planning, health, sexuality, leadership, community action, self-reliance, life skills, culture, heritage, sports, and academics. All of the after-school programs provide a snack, which Girls Inc. receives federal reimbursement for under the CACFP program.

Most programs provide transportation for girls both from school and back home after the program. To transport the girls, Girls Inc. uses their own vans but has also hired a bus company. If needed, many of the staff use their own vehicles to pick up or drop off children. Providing transportation, according to staff member Lena Crowley, is one of the biggest factors encouraging participation. Providing transportation, especially dropping girls off at home after the programs, also helps alleviate any concerns parents may have about program safety.

Contact: Lena Crowley
Phone: 781-592-9744, ext 30

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Barrier 4: Program Stigma

Another barrier affecting Massachusetts's breakfast, summer, and after-school nutrition programs is program stigma. All three programs provide free meals (along with reduced price meals in the SBP) to children who live in families where household income is below 185% of the federal poverty line. This emphasis on providing free or reduced price meals to low-income children has lead to the programs being labeled as programs for "the poor" or "needy."

The most effective solution for eliminating program stigma is for all three programs to utilize options that allow them to provide meals free of charge to all participating students, regardless of household income.

School Breakfast - Universal Free Breakfast

For School Breakfast Programs, the most innovative and effective way of providing free meals is to provide Universal Free Breakfast (UFB) to all students, regardless of family income. Schools that initiate UFB programs notice an immediate increase in participation. In Massachusetts, a two-year pilot study implementing universal free breakfast in 16 schools led to a 30% increase in student participation.[9] Schools across the country have reported even higher rates of participation in the School Breakfast Program when universal free breakfast is combined with **breakfast in the classroom** (see section on "Transportation").

Universal Free Breakfast works best for schools where approximately 75 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced price meals.[10] This allows schools to use reimbursements for free or reduced price meals to cover the income forfeited when meals are served free to students who would otherwise pay.

The most effective way to implement a UFB is for a school to formally apply for one of the alternative reporting methods such as **Provision 2** or 3 of the National School Lunch Act. Provisions 2 and 3 allow schools to provide breakfasts to all students - regardless of family income - for several years without collecting meal applications and still receive federal funding. The revenue schools may lose from students who pay reduced price or full price meals can be offset by the money schools save from no longer having to collect and process paperwork and take in student payments.

For more information on the benefits of Universal Free Breakfast along with information on Provision 2 and 3 and a sample cost-benefit analysis worksheet, see **Appendix 3**. For more information on how a UFB can help control breakfast costs, see the section on "Costs and Funding."

Summer Food and After-School Snacks - Using Census and School Data to Determine Site Eligibility

To overcome program stigma in the Summer Food Service and After-School Snack Program, the best option available is for sponsors to run more area-eligible or "open" sites (sites located in areas where 50% or more of the children are eligible for free or reduced price school meals). Most SFSP and After-School Snack Programs run "open" or area-eligible sites. Running an "open" or area-eligible site allows the sponsor to provide meals to all children free of charge, regardless of household income. Providing free meals to all children eliminates the pricing structure that often labels those children receiving free or reduced price meals as "poor" or "needy."

To identify areas for open sites, SFSP and ASSP sponsors need a way to target their outreach efforts to areas that are likely to be area-eligible. A few important sources of information on income eligibility are available to SFSP and ASSP sponsors to document site eligibility: elementary school data and census block group data.

Elementary School Data. Schools keep data on the number and percentage of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals in the School Lunch or Breakfast Programs. This data reflects SFSP and After-School Snack Program eligibility more accurately than middle and high school data because of the following:

- Elementary schools are more likely to serve children who live close to the school and would be most likely to participate in a SFSP or ASSP.
- Participation in school meal programs is much higher in elementary schools and more accurately reflects an area's need for a SFSP or ASSP.

Census block group data. When the Census Bureau collects population data every ten years, it divides cities and counties into smaller units called "tracts," "block groups," and "blocks." Along with population data, the Census Bureau also collects income information. SFSP and After-School Snack Program sponsors can use Census Bureau data to identify areas where at least 50% of the children are eligible for free or reduced price meals.

When using Census Bureau data, "block group" data has an advantage over "tract" and "block" data since the population sizes in a block group (usually 400-1,200 people) are comparable in size to a typical elementary school's attendance area.

Springfield Public School District
Springfield, MA

In the Springfield Public School District, close to 75% of the student body is eligible for free or reduced price meals. With such high numbers of children eligible for free and reduced price meals, school officials decided about 8 years ago to implement a Universal Free Breakfast program at every school in the Springfield Public School District. Implementation of the UFB program has helped to almost double breakfast participation. Today, the Springfield Public School District serves close to 12,000 cold breakfasts a day.

The Universal Free Breakfast program has helped the Springfield School District overcome the important issue of program stigma. With a UFB program, Springfield no longer has to collect money from students or parents or issue meal tokens or tickets. Students just come to the cafeteria in the morning and pick up a breakfast. Springfield School Public District Food Service Director Tom Mazza states, "the Universal Free Breakfast program makes the whole process much easier for students and the school."

Contact: Tom Mazza - Assistant Finance Manager
Phone: 413-787-7190

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While the use of elementary school data is preferred, reviewing both sources of data is the most accurate way of determining site eligibility. If these sources conflict, consult the MA Department of Education to determine which data source is more reliable for your particular area or site.

The following steps should be taken to obtain school and census information for site eligibility:

1. Call the MA Department of Education first to see if they can help. Give them the address of your proposed site - they may be able to tell you, based on their access to elementary or census data, whether or not the site would be area-eligible.

2. If the MA Department of Education does not have the data you need, contact your local elementary schools and tell them you are interested in operating one or more SFSP or ASSP sites. You will need to obtain from them a letter that includes the school's total enrollment, the number of children eligible for free and reduced price meals, and the boundaries of the school's attendance area.

3. After consulting school data, contact the MA Department of Education to obtain census block group information. They should have a list showing the percentage of children, ages 0-18, eligible for free or reduced price meals in each block group in the state.

For SFSP sponsors, similar information can be found online through two new interactive mapping tools. Both tools can be used to identify area-eligible census blocks and identify areas where sites and sponsors already exist. Go online and visit:

http://www.fairdata2000.com/SummerFood/

http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/sfsp/

Schoharie County Office for the Aging
Cobleskill, NY

When the Office for the Aging first started running a few summer food sites back in 1994, many of the programs were run out of local churches. At the time, the meal program was perceived as a welfare program and very few children participated, which forced the program to stop running. As a result of the Office for the Aging closing their program, there were no SFSP sites in Schoharie County in 1995.

Over the following years, the director of the Office for the Aging worked with several agencies within the county, which already ran programs for children, and asked them to incorporate the SFSP into their existing programs. This collaboration lead to the establishment of three new SFSP sites serving 250 children a day.

One site was run in conjunction with the Youth Recreation Program and included sports and recreational activities. Another site was incorporated into nutrition education classes run by the Community Action Agency. At the third site, meals were served between classes run by the Health Department that taught children about drug and alcohol awareness and prevention, exercise, and health. All three sites were able to overcome program stigma by combining the SFSP with already existing recreation and enrichment programs. This helped overcome the view of many in the community that summer meals were only for the poor.

Contact: Ethel Benninger - Director
Phone: 518-234-4219

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Barrier 5: Administrative Burdens

One of the most widely talked about barriers across all three programs are perceived administrative burdens such as paperwork and program regulations. Administrative burdens can require a lot of staff resources and time, lead to staff turnover, require extra training, and eat up limited administrative program funding. The following are innovative solutions that sponsors in each program can implement to overcome administrative barriers.

School Breakfast - Improvements in Direct Certification

Every August, the MA Department of Transitional Assistance sends a mailing to households in the state with children under 19 who receive either Transitional Assistance to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) or food stamps. This mailing includes verification papers that students can present to the principal's office at their schools to directly certify them for free or reduced price meals. One complaint about this process is that on average only about 50% of these verification papers get returned to the school.

In July 2000, Project Bread was awarded a federal grant to explore and pilot an improved direct certification plan entitled the **Child Nutrition Access Project (CNAP)**. For schools, the project's goal is to streamline the application processes of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program. This is being done by building the capacity for state agencies to share client data from WIC and food stamps for the purposes of cross-referral and/or direct enrollment into the school lunch and breakfast program. Under CNAP, parents and students will no longer have to take verification paperwork into the schools before being directly enrolled into the program.

Currently, CNAP is being piloted in both Boston and Springfield School Districts. Both districts have seen a dramatic increase in school breakfast and school lunch program direct certifications and significantly higher federal reimbursements for meals served to students. Project Bread plans to continue with the Boston and Springfield pilot and add 12 new school districs through the 2003-2004 school year. Currently, the plan is to have statewide implementation of the CNAP initiative by the 2004-2005 school year.

Springfield Public School District
Springfield, MA

Project Bread's Child Nutrition Access Project (CNAP) has helped the Springfield Public School District drastically reduce the number of applications they have to process each year. Prior to the CNAP project, the Springfield Public School District received about 2,000-2,500 direct certifications to the school meal programs a year. With CNAP in place, the school district now has 7,500 direct certifications a year.

Students and parents no longer have to fill out and submit an application or bring in a letter indicating eligibility from the MA Department of Transitional Assistance (required under the previous direct certification process). The school district also sends a letter to low-income parents letting them know that they no longer have to fill out an application for school meals.

CNAP has helped the Springfield Public School District by increasing direct certifications, reducing administrative paperwork, and reducing the barriers that families and students face when filling out and returning applications for meal programs. Overall, Food Service Director Mazza describes CNAP as "outstanding," "well organized," and "highly recommendable to other school districts in the state."

Contact: Tom Mazza - Assistant Finance Manager
Phone: 413-787-7190

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Summer Food - Flexible Federal Options for Summer Food Service Programs

Two important administrative developments affecting the administration of the Summer Food Service Program have occurred over the past few years: the Seamless Summer Food Waiver, and a series of USDA SFSP Policy Memorandum released in both 1999 and 2003. Both serve to either reduce or eliminate administrative barriers facing SFSPs and/or clarify program rules.

Seamless Summer Food Waiver. Under this waiver, schools operate the SFSP as an extension of the NSLP and are reimbursed at the NSLP rate for free meals (which are slightly lower than the SFSP rates). The advantage of this waiver is that schools no longer have to apply for and operate two different programs. Non-school sponsors of the SFSP are not eligible for this waiver. Despite being available in Massachusetts, no schools have used the Seamless Summer Food Waiver due to the lower reimbursement rates. For more information on applying for the Seamless Summer Food Waiver (schools only), contact the Massachusetts Department of Education.

1999 and 2003 USDA SFSP Policy Memorandum. Confusion over strict federal rules and regulations along with complaints about rigid program requirements prompted the USDA to issue a series of memoranda detailing new options or rule clarifications for the Summer Food Service Program. The 1999 and 2003 USDA memorandum tackles a range of issues ranging from sponsor and site application requirements to the use of the "offer versus serve" meal option to mobile feeding sites for rural areas.

For a detailed list of the SFSP memoranda released in 1999 and 2003, see **Appendix 4**. For more information on the 1999 and 2003 USDA SFSP memorandum, contact the Massachusetts Department of Education.

WEST CONTRA COST UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Richmond, CA

The West Contra Cost Unified School District has been a SFSP sponsor for 14 years. During the summer of 2002, it was able to expand its program by participating in the Seamless Summer Feeding Waiver. Because of the waiver, staff were able to use time once spent on monitoring and paperwork to improve meal quality, expand meal service, market the program, and better utilize community volunteers.

In the past, all of WCCUSD's sites only served lunch. During the summer of 2002, the program was able to expand its meal service by adding breakfast at 14 sites and snacks at 10 sites. At the school locations, WCCUSD served hot meals based on the familiar school lunch menu, which resulted in higher attendance and better retention of children. Costs were held down at these sites by utilizing commodity items and excess inventory.

To reach the neediest children, WCCUSD set up outdoor sites in two neighborhoods, which fed approximately 100 children per day. All of these efforts led to a 169% increase in the number of lunches served, and a 100% increase in average daily attendance.

Contact: Heidy Camorongan
Phone: 510-620-2096

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After-School Snack Program - Clarification on Health and Safety Rules

One of the most confusing administrative issues for After-School Snack Programs, especially Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) After-School Snack Programs, is the issue of state and local health and safety requirements. In many cases, After-School Snack Programs are unaware or confused about the standards they are required to meet, if any.

There are a few ways After-School Snack Programs can document compliance with state or local health and safety regulations. Health inspections received for Summer Food Service Programs can also be used as documentation for an After-School Snack Program at the same site. In some jurisdictions, occupancy permits may also be used as documentation. For schools running After-School Snack programs through CACFP, proof of participation in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program is sufficient to meet any health and safety inspection.

For more information on health and safety inspection standards for the After-School Snack Program, contact the MA Department of Education.

After-School Snack Program - Confusion over NSLP and CACFP programs

Many schools and organizations looking to start up an After-School Snack Program, or start receiving reimbursements for an already existing snack program, can become confused over the differences between the NSLP and CACFP program rules and which program they qualify for. The following chart highlights the differences between the two programs:

PROGRAM	AGES SERVED	ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS	FOODS THAT CAN BE PROVIDED	WHEN YOU CAN OFFER FOOD	BASIS OF REIMBURSEMENT
NSLP	0-18	Public schools, and school administered programs	Snacks	After school on days in which school is in session	Low-income area (50% or more of area children eligible for free or reduced-price school meals) or individual household income.
CACFP	0-12	Community-based providers, family child care homes, schools, non-profit organizations.	Snacks and meals (suppers)	School days, weekend, and holidays during the school year	Low-income area (50% or more of area children eligible for free or reduced-price school meals) or individual household income.
CACFP	13-18	Community-based providers, family child care homes, schools, non-profit organizations.	Snacks	School days, weekend, and holidays during the school year	Must be located in a low-income area (50% or more of area children eligible for free or reduced-price school meals).

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Some sponsors may qualify for both CACFP and NSLP after school programs. The following are a few points to consider when determining which after school snack reimbursement program is best for your program:

- ✓ If your program is serving only snacks, it is easier to use NSLP. If you are a non-school entity, to use NSLP you must partner with a school. One advantage of using NSLP is that eligible schools already have free and reduced price meal information on their students, alleviating the often burdensome requirement of collecting income information. Schools can receive reimbursement for snacks through the NSLP simply by adding an addendum to their existing contract through the MA Department of Education.

- ✓ If you want to serve evening meals in addition to or instead of snacks, you should use CACFP; evening meals cannot be served through NSLP. Currently, evening meals can only be served to children 12 and under. Institutions serving both snacks and evening meals can use both programs: snacks served through the NSLP and evening meals served to children ages 12 and under through CACFP

- ✓ After school programs looking to be reimbursed for snacks served on weekends, holidays, and/or vacations should use CACFP. NSLP can only serve snacks on days that school is in session.

- ✓ Programs that are not area-eligible (50% or more of area children eligible for free or reduced price school meals) and that serve snacks to children ages 13-18 can only qualify for reimbursement under the NSLP. CACFP programs serving children ages 13-18 can **only** be located in area-eligible communities.

Summer Food and After-School Snack Program - Building Partnerships

Many Summer Food Service and After-School Snack Programs struggle to address operational and administrative costs, limited staff resources, high staff turnover, complex rules and regulations, and program requirements. To overcome these administrative barriers, many sponsors are turning to building partnerships with other sponsors.

Finding Partners

When looking for potential partners for your nutrition program, it is best to search for organizations and people interested in children and children's issues. Examples of such organizations and people include:

- ✓ Schools (teachers, food service directors, superintendents, school board members, school nurses)
- ✓ County, city and town administrators
- ✓ Public Housing Authorities / Resident Councils
- ✓ Food Banks and other emergency food organizations
- ✓ Pediatricians
- ✓ University and community college nutritionists
- ✓ Boys and Girls Clubs
- ✓ Anti-hunger advocacy organizations
- ✓ Other local SFSP or ASSP programs
- ✓ Parent teacher organizations
- ✓ Parks and Recreation Departments
- ✓ Community Action Agencies
- ✓ Religious Organizations
- ✓ Local businesses
- ✓ Cooperative Extension offices
- ✓ Child Care Workers
- ✓ Social Workers
- ✓ Public Health Nurses
- ✓ Civic organizations
- ✓ Dieticians
- ✓ YMCA and YWCA

Partnering with another program sponsor such as a school, public agency, community group, business, non-profit, or even an individual can effectively reduce many of the administrative barriers that a sponsor would face if they tried to run the program on their own. For many smaller program sponsors, this process of site "consolidation" allows the site to stay open, but under the jurisdiction of a larger sponsor. The larger sponsor assumes responsibility for taking on administrative tasks and providing food, while the original sponsor is in charge of site management.

Building partnerships can help SFSP and ASSPs in a number of ways:

Outreach: Partnerships can help sponsors find new sites or raise community or neighborhood awareness on the availability and location of SFSP and ASSP sites. Statewide advocacy groups (Project Bread), local organizations, and public agencies (MA Department of Education) all have experience with, and systems for, communicating with the public.

Money: Many partnerships can bring in additional financial assistance for program activities, to improve outreach, and/or improve meal quality. This can be especially important for programs facing financial needs.

Resources: Partnerships can also help bring in other non-financial resources such as staff and volunteers, business expertise or consulting, and resources for activities such as recreational equipment and facility space.

Meal preparation and distribution: Sponsors who cannot prepare their own meals can look to develop partnerships with entities such as schools or a food service management company to prepare and distribute meals.

There are important steps sponsors should consider when building a partnership with other entities.

1. Establish needs and goals. Determine what the needs are, how a partnership can help (outreach, program activities, funding, meals), and the goals you want to achieve through the partnership.

2. Find partners whose skills and resources differ from yours.

3. Be sure to provide any potential partners information on the nutrition program you are sponsoring and the many benefits it has for local children, along with information on how their assistance can help your program (or vice versa). See Appendix 1 for information on the benefits of the SFSP and ASSP.

4. Define roles and tasks in any partnership, and be open to modifying your plan as potential partners offer their own ideas. When roles and tasks have been worked out, agree on a written description of each partner's responsibilities.

5. Be sure to find ways to publicly acknowledge your partners for their work.

Conclusion

The barriers described in this publication represent a serious threat to the success of federal child nutrition programs and to the health and educational readiness of Massachusetts children. The good news is that there are solutions available to sponsors to overcome these barriers. Even better news is that there is a growing list of program sponsors from across Massachusetts and the country that have successfully implemented these solutions.

For those School Breakfast, Summer Food Service, and After-School Snack Programs that have overcome operational and administrative challenges, the payoffs are well worth the effort and wait. Successful programs witness increased funding, reduced costs, and happier parents, staff, teachers, principals, and community officials.

Ultimately, school nutrition programs that successfully overcome barriers through innovative practices and solutions see healthier children ready to learn. Well-fed children do better in school and on standardized tests, have fewer behavioral problems, and are less likely to be absent and tardy to school. This benefit is especially important for low-income children who, without the aid of programs like School Breakfast, Summer Food, and After-School Snacks, often go without the nutrition needed to develop and learn.

Resources

There are a variety of resources available for sponsors of breakfast, summer, and after-school nutrition programs.

Massachusetts Organizations

Project Bread
160 North Washington Street
Boston, MA 02114
Phone: (617) 723-5000
Fax: (617) 248-8877
E-mail: info@projectbread.org
Web: http://www.projectbread.org
Project Bread is the leading anti-hunger organization in Massachusetts dedicated to ending hunger in the state. Project Bread offers a variety of excellent resources for child nutrition program sponsors such as training and outreach materials, general assistance on program rules and regulations, and best practices.

Massachusetts School Food Service Association
831 Beacon Street, #163
Newton, MA 02458
Phone: (617) 527-5810
Fax: (617) 332-5856
Email: info@maschoolfood.org
Web: http://www.maschoolfood.org
MSFSA brings information, services and continuing education to school food service professionals in Massachusetts.

National Organizations

Center on Hunger and Poverty
Brandeis University
Mailstop 077
Waltham, MA 02454
Phone: (781) 736-8885
Fax: (781) 736-3925
E-mail: hunger@brandeis.edu
Web: http://www.centeronhunger.org
The Center on Hunger and Poverty offers a variety of child nutrition resources for program sponsors.

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)
1875 Connecticut Ave., NW Suite 540
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: (202) 986-2200
Fax: (202) 986-2525
Email: webmaster@frac.org
Web: http://www.frac.org
FRAC has an excellent array of published resources on all of the child nutrition programs along with a dedicated and experienced staff with expertise in program support.

National Organizations (continued)

American School Food Service Association (ASFSA)
700 South Washington Street, Suite 300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone: (703) 739-3900
Fax: (703) 739-3915
E-mail: servicecenter@asfsa.org
Web: http://www.asfsa.org
ASFSA is the professional organization for food service workers. In collaboration with the National Dairy Council, ASFSA helped create The *Expanding Breakfast Kit*, an excellent resource designed to help schools start alternative breakfast service programs such as Breakfast in the Classroom and Universal Free Breakfast. Contact ASFSA for information on ordering this kit.

National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI)
The University of Mississippi
P.O. Drawer 188
University, MS 38677-0188
Phone: (662) 915-7658 or (800) 321-3054
Fax: (800) 321-3061
Email: nfsmi@olemiss.edu
Web: http://www.nfsmi.org
NFSMI provides information and services that promote the improvement of child nutrition programs. They have an extensive on-line library of training, education, and evaluation materials.

Government Agencies

Massachusetts Department of Education (MA DOE)
Child Nutrition Programs
Phone: (781) 338-6480
Fax: (781) 338-3399
Email: nutrition@doe.mass.edu
Web: http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/
MA DOE is the state agency that oversees and administers all child nutrition programs in Massachusetts. MA DOE offers a large variety of resources for program sponsors such as trainings, educational activities, outreach and evaluation materials, and experienced staff ready to answer any question you may have.

USDA Food and Nutrition Service - Northeast Regional Office
10 Causeway Street, Room 501
Boston, MA 02222-1071
Phone: (617) 565-6375
Fax: (617) 565-6387
Web: http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/
The USDA FNS is the primary federal government agency that oversees and administers all child nutrition programs in the country. The USDA offers a variety of resources for program sponsors including training, media assistance, education, evaluation, outreach, and best practice materials.

Internet Resources

Meals 4 Kids
http://www.meals4kids.org
Offers a variety of resources to increase participation in Massachusetts School Breakfast and Summer Food Service Programs. Developed by Project Bread.

Food and Nutrition Information Center - USDA FNS
http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/pubs_and_db.html
Great list of resources for all child nutrition programs. Has the most extensive list of After-School Snack Program resources on the web.

Summer Food Target Mapper
http://www.fairdata2000.com/SummerFood/
This interactive map was developed for local groups who need highly detailed (street-level) census information to identify neighborhoods and communities for Summer Food Service Program expansion.

Summer Food Service Program Map Machine
http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/sfsp/
This interactive web machine combines data on 2001 SFSP sponsors and sites, Census 2000 data on small geographic areas, and school census data. Users can create maps that allow them to infer at a glance whether SFSP sites are located in areas of the highest need, and whether some qualified areas have been overlooked.

Summer Food Service Program Library of Resources
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Summer/Library/index.html
Provides outreach materials, media kits, and tips for success.

National Network for Child Care resources on Nutrition and Diet
http://twosocks.ces.ncsu.edu/cyfdb/browse_2.php?search=NNCC
Provides numerous resources on a wide range of child care issues including diet and nutrition.

Healthy School Meals Resource System
http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/
The Healthy School Meals Resource System (HSMRS) provides information to persons working in USDA's Child Nutrition Programs on issues such as recipes, food safety, regulations, and computer software for school child nutrition programs.

Federal Resources for After-School Programs
http://www.afterschool.gov
Provides a numerous resources on a variety of after-school care issues including diet and nutrition, safety, child care, fundraising, and technology.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: About the Child Nutrition Programs

School Breakfast Program

What is the School Breakfast Program?

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) provides meals to students in public and nonprofit private schools. The SBP is administered at the federal level by the United States Department of Agriculture and at the state level by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Who can participate?

Any child in participating schools can purchase a meal through the SBP. Children from households with incomes at or below 130% of the federal poverty line can receive a school breakfast at no cost; children from households with incomes between 130 to 185% of the poverty level can obtain meals at reduced price. Schools participating in the SBP are able to receive partial reimbursements for the meals they provide.

Are there any special rules for Massachusetts School Breakfast Programs?

Schools meeting the following requirements are required to make the breakfast available to students: [11]

- "Severe Need Schools" - schools where 40 percent or more of the lunches served to students at the school in the second preceding year were served free or at reduced prices.
- Have on file a combined total of 50 or more free and reduced price meal applications as of October of the preceding school year.

How many schools and students are enrolled in the School Breakfast Program in Massachusetts?

Nearly 120,000 students from over 1,500 Massachusetts' schools were enrolled in the SBP in the 2001-2002 school year. More than 100,000 of these students (84% of total participants) are low-income students who receive free or reduced price meals. Only 65% of schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) also participate in the SBP. Only 45% of low-income students covered by the NSLP also participate in the SBP. [12]

Why is the School Breakfast Program important:

School breakfast is healthy and often healthier than breakfast at home

School Breakfast Programs are required to follow strict nutritional guidelines on fat (less than 30% of calories), saturated fat (less than 10% of calories), and nutrients (one fourth or more of daily recommended levels). [13] Research shows that children who have school breakfast eat more fruits, drink more milk products, and consume less saturated fat than those who don't eat breakfast or eat breakfast at home. [14]

School breakfast produces important educational benefits

Children who eat school breakfast increase their math and reading scores as well as improve their speed and memory in cognitive tests. Children who eat breakfast at school - closer to class and test-taking time - perform better on standardized tests than those who skip breakfast or eat breakfast at home.

For low-income children, it may be the only meal they have before lunch

Many low-income families lack the money to provide good breakfasts at home every day or provide money for them to buy breakfast at school. Free and reduced price breakfast allows at-risk children to get the morning nutrition they need to successfully start the school day.

Summer Food Service Program

What is the Summer Food Service Program?

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free nutritious meals and snacks to children during school summer vacations. Meals and snacks are often provided in conjunction with educational and/or recreational activities. The SFSP is administered at the federal level by the United States Department of Agriculture and at the state level by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Who can participate?

While the SFSP is specifically targeted towards feeding children from households with income below 185% of the poverty line, all children up to age 18 can receive a free meal or snack through the SFSP (unless the program is closed due to size, safety issues, or space limitations). Sponsors of a SFSP can be a public or private non-profit school food authority, a local government entity, residential camp, a National Youth Sports Program, or a private, non-profit organization.

What are the rules for SFSP sponsors and sites?

The SFSP is operated in "open sites" where at least half of the children in the geographic area are eligible for free or reduced price meals, and in "enrolled sites," where 50% or more of the children participating in the particular program are determined eligible for free or reduced price school meals based on individual applications or National School Lunch Program applications.

Once the site is eligible, all children can eat SFSP meals and snacks for free. Open sites must also be open for food to children in the neighborhood, regardless of whether they are enrolled in the overall program or not. SFSP programs are reimbursed a flat rate (different amount depending on the meal) for both operational and administrative costs.

How many children participate in the Summer Food Service Program in Massachusetts?

In FY 2001, close to 49,000 Massachusetts' children took advantage of the SFSP (an additional 9,000 in the NSLP summer food program). In July 2002, 88 sponsors, covering 705 sites, served close to 2.5 million lunches to children in the SFSP.[15]

What are the benefits of the Summer Food Service Program?

Summer Food sites keep children safe and occupied during non-school months

Recent research shows that 93% of SFSP sites provide educational or recreational activities in addition to providing nutritious meals and snacks.[16] These activities keep kids safe during non-school months when children may otherwise be home alone while the parents are at work.

Summer Food provides nutritious meals to at-risk low-income children

Many of the children served at SFSP sites are from low-income households. Most of these children benefit from School Lunch and School Breakfast programs during the year. SFSPs provide these children with the necessary nutrition during summer months when the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs are not available.

Summer meals are nutritious

Meals and snacks are required to follow strict federal nutrition guidelines, similar to School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

After-School Snack Program

What is the After-School Snack Program?

The After-School Snack Program (ASSP) provides free nutritious snacks and meals to children participating in after school programs. The ASSP is run under the auspices of both the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The ASSP is administered at the federal level by the United States Department of Agriculture and at the state level by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Who can participate in the After-School Snack Program?

Any child up to age 18 can participate in an ASSP, however the NSLP and CACFP After-School Snack Programs differ in terms of specific requirements for certain age groups. See the section on "Administrative Burdens" for more information on the differences between the two programs.

What are the rules for After-School Snack Program sponsors and sites?

To be eligible for reimbursement for an ASSP under either NSLP or CACFP, the after school program must meet two important criteria: (1) the program must provide care in an organized, structured, and supervised after-school setting, and (2) the program must include educational or enrichment activities. Programs that provide athletic activity as or along side enrichment or educational activity are eligible for the snack program; however, organized athletic programs engaged in interscholastic sports are not eligible.

To operate an ASSP under the NSLP, a school must sponsor the program. Although the school can contract with non-school entities to provide after-school care services, and programs can be run in non-school facilities, the school must retain final administrative and management responsibility for the program and assume responsibility for meeting food program requirements. CACFP ASSPs must be operated by a public or private non-profit organization (including a school) that provides care in an after school setting.

Reimbursement for snacks in the ASSP is determined in one of two ways:

Area eligibility: program sites can qualify as "area eligible" if the surrounding area has at least 50% of the children eligible for free or reduced price school meals. Programs that are area-eligible receive snack reimbursement at the free rate for snacks served to all children, regardless of household income.

Individual eligibility: programs that do not qualify as "area eligible" are still eligible in the ASSP (except CACFP programs serving children ages 13-18) but are reimbursed for snacks based on each individual's eligibility for full, free, or reduced price meals.

What are the benefits of the After-School Snack Program?

After-school snacks are nutritious

ASSPs are required to follow strict federal nutrition standards. Snacks reimbursed under the ASSP are often much healthier than snack food items found in school vending machines or the snacks kids may get at home.

After-School Snack Programs provide additional funding to after school programs

Before 1998, after-school snacks received no federal reimbursements. Now, eligible after school programs serving snacks can receive federal reimbursements for snacks served to eligible children. These reimbursements can bring needed money to after school programs and provide incentive for expansion or improvement.

After-School Snacks and Suppers provide nutritious meals to at-risk low-income children

Many of the children served at After-School Snack and Supper sites are from low-income households who risk going the rest of the day without a healthy meal.

Appendix 2: Sample "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) Sheet

Program directors often have to field tough questions about running a School Breakfast, Summer Food Service, and/or After-School Snack Program. These questions often deal with issues ranging from program safety to financial stability to labor concerns. Sponsors looking to implement an innovative practice like Universal Free Breakfast or radically change the program can face especially tough questions. It is important that sponsors adequately answer all questions and address all concerns. Failure to do so can lead to strong administrative apprehension toward program expansion, improvement, and/or start-up.

One way to properly address all concerns and answer all questions is to raise adequate awareness about the benefits of the program. Raising general awareness about the strong health, academic, and nutritional benefits of child nutrition programs can often times help reduce or overcome other concerns a staff member, official, or parent may have. For example, a school teacher may be more supportive of a program if it results in higher test scores and better behaving students, even though the program may also mean increased supervision time or potential reductions in instructional time.

Another way to properly address all concerns and questions is to prepare a "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) sheet, which includes carefully worded responses to the most frequently asked questions. The following is a sample FAQ sheet with sample questions and answers for all three programs. This is a template model only; the questions and answers are hypothetical.

School Breakfast:

Question: How will a Universal Free Breakfast program affect the school financially?

Answer: Research shows that if a school has 75% or more of students eligible for free or reduced price meals, a Universal Free Breakfast program can actually lead to increased revenue, mainly due to a dramatic increase in federal reimbursements from higher student participation. Labor costs can increase under a Universal Free Breakfast program, but many UFB programs see much greater productivity and efficiency from food service workers. UFB programs actually see lower labor costs per meal than traditional, non-UFB school breakfast programs.

Question: Won't a "breakfast in the classroom" model lead to lost instructional time?

Answer: Very little instructional time is actually lost, because children usually read or do other work while they are eating. The first few minutes of class are often used to take attendance and make final preparations for the day. Some teachers use the time to teach nutrition by eating with the students. Teachers also feel that the social benefits of starting the day enjoying a little food together in a "family style" atmosphere are significant, and the children get their "morning hellos" over with and are ready to concentrate. Breakfast usually only lasts for about 10-15 minutes, including serving and clean up.

Summer Food Service Program

Question: What is being done to ensure the safety of the children at summer programs?

Answer: Our programs are held at sites in safe neighborhoods. Our staff is trained in CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver. We have a 3-1 child/staff ratio, which provides us with adequate staff to watch over all children. We refrain from dangerous activities such as contact sports or activities that could endanger a child. During public outings (zoos, museums, amusement parks, etc.), we employ additional chaperones and require a signed parent permission slip before a child can participate.

Question: What transportation options do children have to get to the program?

Answer: We do not have access to the school district's buses, however we have reached an agreement with the local Meals on Wheels program to pick up children in the Elm, Pine, and Jackson neighborhoods. We will also be renting a van from the local Catholic church to pick up students in the Clinton and Porter neighborhoods. We are thinking of developing a mobile meal site for children in more rural neighborhoods.

After-School Snack Program

Question: Are the snacks served nutritious?

Answer: Yes. To receive reimbursements from the federal government for serving snacks, strict and specific nutritional guidelines need to be met. The snacks we provide through the ASSP are more than likely to be more nutritious than snacks provided at home or obtained through a vending machine.

Question: We already have a successful snack program. How will enrolling in the CACFP or NSLP After-School Snack Program help us?

Answer: The main benefit in enrolling in the NSLP/CACFP ASSP is that it allows us to receive reimbursements for the snacks we serve. This additional money will help us financially, as currently we either rely on food donations or take from other organizational expense accounts. Additionally, since our program is located in a low-income area, we can offer snacks to all of the children free of charge. This will lead to increased participation, increased revenue from federal reimbursements, and will reduce the stigma some low-income children feel when participating in the program.

Appendix 3: Universal Free Breakfast Fact Sheet

Universal Free Breakfast (UFB) refers to a school program that offers breakfast at no charge to all students, regardless of household income. Universal Free Breakfast is usually offered by schools that have a large percentage of low-income students eligible for free and reduced price lunch (household incomes below 185% of poverty). UFB is also usually offered in the form of classroom breakfast or other innovative "after the bell" breakfast practices (see section on "Transportation" for more information).

Benefits of Universal Free Breakfast:

Making breakfast available to all students free of charge, regardless of income, breaks down a whole host of program barriers.

- ✓ **Increases Participation**
  Results from a Massachusetts study in 16 Boston Public schools showed that SBP participation rates in schools offering UFB were 30% higher than before UFB was implemented. When UFB was incorporated into a classroom breakfast setting, participation rates in the pilot schools doubled from an average of 27% to 54%.[17]

- ✓ **Eliminates stigma**
  Many low-income children and parents refuse to participate in school meal programs because they feel that participating in free and reduced price meal programs labels them as "needy" or "poor." UFB eliminates the payment option for school breakfast, further eliminating the stigma many parents and students feel when they are singled out for free or reduced price meals.

- ✓ **Improves student achievement, diets, and behavior**
  Eating breakfast at school can lead to improved math and reading scores, improved performance on standardized tests, improvements in speed and memory in cognitive tests, and decreased tardiness, absenteeism, and disciplinary problems. Children who have school breakfast also eat more fruits, drink more milk, and consume less saturated fat than children who eat at home or not at all.

- ✓ **Increases reimbursements and reduces cost**
  Research shows that schools with UFB programs have higher total breakfast revenue from reimbursements, even in the face of eliminating paid meals. The same research also shows that UFB programs have lower average labor costs per meal, especially for UFB programs served in the classroom.[18]

Provision 2 and Provision 3:

Provision 2:

- Works best for schools and sites that may have minimal growth (under 5%) in average daily attendance from year to year.
- Has a four-year cycle: base year (to establish student percentages derived from monthly numbers of free, reduced price, and paid eaters), plus three additional years when only the total number of eaters is tracked and applied to base-year percentages.
- The number of claimed meals can be adjusted for increased program coverage.

Provision 3:

- Works best for schools and sites that may have minimal growth (under 5%) in average daily attendance from year to year.
- Has a four-year cycle, but no new data need to be collected in the first (base) year.
- The number of claimed meals may not be changed afterwards to reflect increased program coverage.

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How to implement a Universal Free Breakfast Program:

To institute a UFB program, school districts have two options:

1. The first is to simply eliminate the pricing policy at breakfast. All of the necessary paperwork and applications are still collected for the lunch program, and the household income categories for students are noted, but no student pays for breakfast (although monies are still collected at lunch). Monthly participation reports for breakfast are submitted to the state agency as usual and the appropriate reimbursements are received by the school district.

2. A second option is to formally apply for one of the alternative reporting policies such as Provision 1, 2 and 3. (see text box on preceding page for information on Provision 2 and 3). These reporting methods were devised by USDA to reduce paperwork for schools that have high proportions of free and reduced price meals. Schools that use one of the Provisions typically collect applications during the first year while serving breakfast at no cost. After this "base year," no applications are collected for at least 2-4 years (depending on which Provision is used). Currently, Provision II is the most frequently used alternative reporting method.

UFB programs usually work best for schools that have at least 75% or more students who are eligible for free or reduced price meals.[19] This allows schools to use reimbursements for free and reduced price meals to cover the income forfeited when meals are served free to students who would otherwise pay.

In addition to financial considerations, food service directors must evaluate the school's facilities to determine the options available for implementation of a UFB program. Offering free breakfast will most likely lead to greater participation, which may require a different perspective on how breakfasts are to be served to students. The following areas should be evaluated:

Cafeteria

a. Is it large enough to hold all of the students who will eat breakfast?
b. Should breakfast be staggered to accommodate large numbers?
c. Will some students need to eat in the classroom?
d. Are there other times or places that students can eat?

School Time

a. Does the school building open early enough to allow time for the students to eat?
b. Can the start of the school day be modified slightly?
c. Can class schedules be altered to allow for a mid-morning breakfast break?

Transportation

a. Do the buses arrive in time for students to eat before class?
b. Can bus schedules be modified? If not, can the start of school be pushed back?
c. Can buses be staggered so children do not arrive at the same time?
d. Do most children walk or get rides to school? Do these children arrive on time?

Supervision

a. Do teacher contracts allow time in the morning for supervision of breakfast?
b. Can teacher schedules be altered to ensure adequate adult supervision?
c. Should breakfast be part of the school day, either served in the classroom or in the cafeteria, but after the bell?
d. Who else is available to supervise? Consider food service directors, office staff, teachers' aides, and community volunteers.

Worksheet for Calculation of Breakfast Costs:

Use these sample cost-benefit worksheets when determining the financial viability of a UFB program in your school or school district.

Cost-Benefit Analysis Example #1*

Step 1 - Determine Income

	Meals Served	USDA Reimbursement ** (assumes severe need)	Reimbursement Received
Free	_____	X $1.43 =	_____
Reduced	_____	X $1.13 =	_____
Paid	_____	X $0.22 =	_____
		Total Income	$_____

Step 2 - Determine Costs

	Cost/Meal		Number Meals		Total Cost
Food/Supplies	$_____	x	_____	=	_____
Labor/Benefits	$_____	x	_____	=	_____
Indirect Costs	$_____	x	_____	=	_____
			Total Expenses		$_____

Step 3 - Determine Ability to Cover Costs

Total Income (step 1)		$_____
Total Expenses (step 2)	-	$_____
Operational Gain (or loss)		$_____

*** Adapted from the California Food Policy Advocates "Cost Analysis Worksheet"**

Cost-Benefit Analysis Example #2*

Step 1 - Determine Income

	Total Number of Students per Category	USDA Reimbursement ** (assumes severe need)	Totals
Free	_____	X $1.43 =	_____
Reduced	_____	X $1.13 =	_____
Paid	_____	X $0.22 =	_____
		Total Reimbursement	$_____

Step 2 - Determine Average Reimbursement per Meal

Total Reimbursement (step 1) ÷ Total Student Enrollment = Average Reimbursement/Meal

Step 3 - Determine Average Cost per Meal (refer to example 1, step 2)

Step 4 - Determine Ability to Cover Costs

Average Reimbursement/Meal (step 2)		$_____
Cost per Meal (step 3)	-	$_____
Operational Gain (or loss)/meal		$_____

*** Adapted from the Tacoma, Washington School District**

**** Reimbursement rates for the School Breakfast Program are effective from July 1, 2003 - June 30, 2004**

Appendix 4: USDA 1999 and 2003 SFSP Memorandum

Over the past four years, the United States Department of Agriculture has undertaken a major legislative and regulatory initiative to encourage expansion of the Summer Food Service Program. To date, USDA has issued 27 policy memos, to "revise and clarify policies" for the SFSP to address many of the obstacles identified by program sponsors through meetings and "listening sessions." Some of the policies reflect recent legislative changes. Some are available at the option of state agencies, some through regional USDA-FNS offices; none require further approval from Washington.

1999 USDA SFSP Memorandum

The following is a brief list of some of the important USDA SFSP policy memorandum issued in 1999. Not all of the memoranda are listed here. For a complete list, contact the USDA-FNS or visit: http://www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/sfsppolicies.html.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #1-99, Sponsor and Site Application Requirements.** Affirming support for reducing paperwork to the maximum extent possible, this memo allows state agencies to waive some sponsor and site application procedures for "experienced" sponsors - sponsors which operated the same sites in the SFSP in the prior year with no significant deficiencies or operational problems.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #2-99, Availability of School and Census Eligibility Data.** Encourages states to provide SFSP sponsors with school and census eligibility data to assist them in identifying eligible sites.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #3-99, Issues Relating to Meal Service at Sites.** State agencies may give sponsors and sites the option of allowing children to take a vegetable or fruit component off-site for later consumption.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #4-99, Private Non-Profit Sponsors Procuring Meals from Commercial Vendors.** Allows private non-profit sponsors to contract with a commercial food service management company, according private non-profit sponsors the same flexibility as other sponsors.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #6-99, Waiver of Site Limits for Private Nonprofit Organization Sponsors.** Regional offices may grant waivers of the limits placed on the number of participants per site (above 300 up to 500) and sites (more than 25) that private nonprofit sponsors may operate. This policy also eliminates the limit on the total daily attendance, previously set at 2,500 children, for all sites served by a private non-profit sponsor, and raises the site limit from 20 to 25.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #7-99, Meals Prepared in Schools and Permissible Use of Offer Versus Serve.** Authorizes state agencies to permit schools and non-school sponsors that contract with schools for meals to substitute the meal pattern requirements of the National School Lunch Program or NSLP and the School Breakfast Program or SBP (including Nutrient Standard Menu Planning or NMSP) for the meal requirements of the SFSP. Prior state agency approval is not required but states may require sponsors to provide advance notification if they choose to use school program meal planning options. There are no planning alternatives for snacks, which have the same meal pattern for both NSLP and SFSP. All SFSP sites sponsored by a school food authority, regardless of location, may use offer versus serve during summer. This is not an option for non-school sponsors.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #8-99, Use of Other Programs' Eligibility Information for Closed Enrolled Sites and Camps in the SFSP.** Authorizes (but does not require) schools and other local level administrators of Child Nutrition Agencies to release free and reduced price meal or free milk eligibility information of individual children to SFSP sponsors to document eligibility of children at closed enrolled sites and camps, without consent of the applicant. Schools, government entities, and private non-profit organizations that sponsor the SFSP and have access to family income data by virtue of their administration of other assistance programs are authorized to disclose that information to determine eligibility for a closed enrolled SFSP site.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #10-99, Single, Permanent Agreements for School Food Authorities Administering the Child Nutrition Programs.** Requires state agencies administering any combination of the Child Nutrition Programs (NSLP, SBP, CACFP, SFSP) under the same state administering agency to use a single state/local agreement for all programs operated by the school food authority under that state agency, effective September 30, 1999. Multiple programs operated under an alternate state agency must be combined into a single agreement. Agreements must be permanent, and may be amended as necessary.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #14-99, Implementation of Public Law 105-336.**
  - Allows private non-profit organizations to operate up to 25 sites.
  - Retains limit on the number of children who can be served at any one site (not more than 300 children, or 500 with a state agency waiver) while eliminating the cap on the total number of children who may be served.
  - Permits private nonprofit organizations to purchase meals from commercial vendors.
  - Eliminates "indication of interest" requirements, which restricted private nonprofit organization sponsors to participating in SFSP only in areas where a school food authority or government sponsor had not indicated an interest in operating the program by March 1 of each year.
  - Permits schools using offer versus serve during the school year to use it at school sites in summer as well.
  - Requires state agencies to use a single, permanent state/local agreement for all programs operated by the school food authority under that state agency; this includes multiple programs operated under an alternate state agency.
  - Provides school districts with additional administrative flexibility (for example, when the same school food service personnel administer the SFSP and the school meal programs, the SA does not need to review the summer program in the same year school food service operations have been reviewed and found satisfactory).
  - Permits school districts to prepare meals for CACFP and SFSP using the same meal pattern as in school meals programs.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #15-99, Supper Meal Service.** Permits state agencies to approve sponsors to serve suppers in place of lunches. Only migrant sites and residential camps can serve both.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #17-99, "Mobile Feeding Sites" in Rural Areas.** Encourages the innovative and effective practice of transporting meals to children in rural areas, including employing buses as meal sites, and permits cost of transporting children to feeding sites in rural areas as an allowable operating cost.

- **SFSP Policy Memorandum #19-99, Small Resource Farmers and Gleaning.** Encourages program administrators and partners to better utilize small resource farmers and gleaning (including field gleaning, perishable food rescue or salvage, food rescue, or nonperishable food collection) efforts to enhance and add nutrition, value and variety to SFSP meals.

2003 USDA SFSP Policy Memorandum

In 2003, the USDA issued a series of additional policy memorandum. The new memorandum include the following policy changes and revisions:

- SFSP sponsors complain that rules limiting the amount of time between meals and the duration of meal times are overly restrictive and limits participation. The new USDA policy memoranda offer more flexibility to state agencies to allow sponsors to **change the length of time between and duration of meal services in special cases**. Sponsors need to first speak with the MA Department of Education before changing the times of their programs.

- **Closed enrolled sites** can now be eligible for SFSP reimbursement based on area free and reduced price data for the location of the site, rather than on documentation that at least half of the enrolled children at each site are eligible for free or reduced price meals. Therefore, any site located in an area in which 50% of the children are from households eligible for free or reduced price meals will be eligible for SFSP reimbursement, regardless of whether the site serves an identified group of children or is open to the community.

- SFSP regulations require sponsors to visit each of their sites at least once during the first week of operation. In 1999, the USDA gave authorization to state agencies **to waive this requirement for certain school sponsors with experienced staff and school sponsors that had no significant operational problems in the prior year**. In 2003, the USDA expanded this waiver **to all SFSP sponsors**, including non-school SFSP sponsors.

- With approval from the USDA-FNS Northeast Regional Office, SFSP sponsors may be able to receive reimbursement for meals served prior to the approval of their application when extenuating circumstances have delayed approval of the sponsor's application.

Endnotes

[1] United States Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service. National School Lunch Program: Participation and Lunches Served. http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/slsummar.htm

[2] Children can also receive meals during the summer months through the National School Lunch Program. The NSLP serves summer meals during summer school sessions or in school systems that are year round. In Massachusetts, only 13% of summer meals are served through the NSLP. Due to this small number, only the Summer Food Service Program will be discussed in this publication.

[3] Food Research and Action Center. (2002). *School Breakfast Report Card: 2002*. Washington, D.C.: Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). http://www.frac.org

[4] Food Research and Action Center. (June 2003). *Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report*. Washington, D.C.: Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). http://www.frac.org

[5] Data from the MA Department of Education. April 8, 2003.

[6] This number does not fully represent the total number of children receiving an after-school snack. Many schools and other entities serve snacks in an after-school setting but do not receive federal reimbursement for the snack under the CACFP or NSLP After School Snack Program. Data on the number of children receiving non-reimbursable snacks in not available.

[7] Gordon, A., Briefel, R., Needels, K., Wemmerus, N., Zavitsky T., Rosso R., Tasse T., Kalb L., Peterson, A., Creel D. (March 2003). *Feeding Low-Income Children When School is Out: The Summer Food Service Program*. Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

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[9] Project Bread. "Study Shows Link Between School Breakfast and Academic Achievement." Boston, MA. http://www.projectbread.org/MCHI/mghbreakfaststudy.htm

[10] Center on Hunger and Poverty. (March 1999). *A Guide to Universal Free School Breakfast Programs*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University. http://www.centeronhunger.org

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[12] Food Research and Action Center. (2002). *School Breakfast Report Card: 2002*. Washington, D.C.: Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). http://www.frac.org

[13] United States Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service. (August 2002). School Breakfast Program - Fact Sheet. http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Breakfast/AboutBFast/faqs.htm

[14] United States Department of Agriculture: Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. (December 1999). *Eating Breakfast Greatly Improves Schoolchildren's Diet Quality*. http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/Insights/insight15.PDF

[15] Food Research and Action Center. (June 2003). *Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report*. Washington, D.C.: Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). http://www.frac.org

[16] Bernstein L.S., McLaughlin, J.E., Crepinsek M.K., Daft L.M., Murphy J.M. (October 2002). Evaulation of the School Breakfast Program Pilot Project: Summary of Findings from the First Year of Implementation. *Nutrition Assistance Program Report Series*, No. CN-02-SBP, p. 19.

[17] Project Bread. "Study Shows Link Between School Breakfast and Academic Achievement." Boston, MA. http://www.projectbread.org/MCHI/mghbreakfaststudy.htm

[18] Bernstein L.S., McLaughlin, J.E., Crepinsek M.K., Daft L.M., Murphy J.M. (October 2002). Evaulation of the School Breakfast Program Pilot Project: Summary of Findings from the First Year of Implementation. *Nutrition Assistance Program Report Series*, No. CN-02-SBP, 10-12.

[19] Center on Hunger and Poverty. (March 1999). *A Guide to Universal Free School Breakfast Programs*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University. http://www.centeronhunger.org

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